

What are storm-based warnings? How does it work?

Storm Based Warnings mark a shift in the focus of weather warnings from geopolitical boundaries to the area actually under threat. In a nutshell, it is a graphical depiction of the specific threat area.

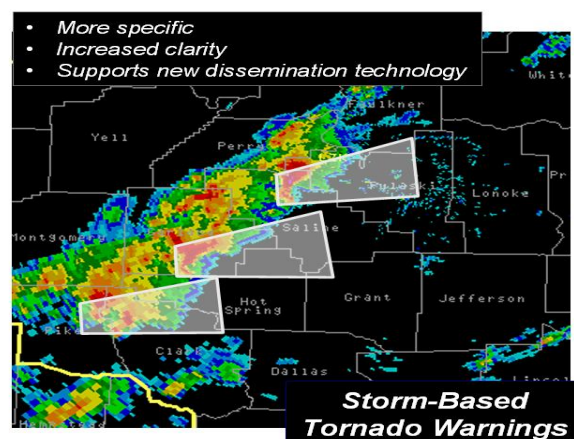
How should I use storm-based warnings?

Effective use of storm-based warnings includes use of:

- **Graphic** for location of the threat ...AND...
- **Text** for storm history and its specific potential

What are the advantages?

- The area covered by a warning is limited to only the area (in time and space) actually under threat.
- The impact on residents outside the threat area is minimized.
- Local officials can easily determine which sirens to sound.
- Spotter and first responder resources can be focused on the true area threatened by a given storm.
- *Storm Based Warnings* promote improved graphical warning displays, and support a wider warning distribution through cell phone alerts, pagers, and web-enabled Personal Data Assistants (PDAs).
- Media can easily display warnings, quickly showing the public the area of greatest threat.



What about NOAA Weather Radios and EAS systems?

Systems that use the standard FIPS code (such as NOAA Weather Radio and the EAS system) continue to operate as in the past, using the FIPS codes. In the future, FIPS codes may be further refined to partial counties based on the *Storm Based Warning* threat area.

What are the challenges?

- Translating the threat area into words for audio broadcast can be difficult. For audio broadcast, portions of counties are described by compass points (e.g. northeast, south central). The use of familiar landmarks such as highways or rivers as reference points will also help describe the warned area.
- At times, multiple warnings of the same type may be in effect for the same county at the same time.

Other Important Things to Know

- More than one warning can be in effect for the same county at the same time.
- Warnings can shrink in area, but never expand. If a severe storm is expected to track outside of the current warning area, a new *Storm Based Warning* will be issued for the region now at risk.
- When severe weather is no longer expected, your local NOAA NWS Weather Forecast Office cancels the warning or allows it to expire.

What can I expect in the future?

Look for a rapid increase in applications displaying *Storm Based Warnings*, in concert with other relevant information. For example, web applications used with GIS can display the warnings, list affected schools and hospitals, and give demographics for the warned area.

On the web:

Storm Based Warnings Web Site www.weather.gov/sbwarnings
 National Weather Service www.weather.gov
 National Weather Service Quad Cities www.weather.gov/quadcities
 Iowa Environmental Mesonet <http://mesonet.agron.iastate.edu/current/radar.phtml>